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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/539,734	03/30/2000	Per Hammarlund	042390.P6873	8889

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Andre l Marais
Blakely Sokoloff Taylor & Zafman LLP
12400 Wilshire Boulevard
7th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90025

EXAMINER
HARKNESS, CHARLES A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2183	

DATE MAILED: 01/24/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/539,734	Applicant(s) HAMMARLUND ET AL.	
	Examiner Charles A Harkness	Art Unit 2183	

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address* --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *30 March 2000*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-22* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-22* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *30 March 2000* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Papers Submitted

1. It is hereby acknowledged that the following papers have been received and placed of record in the file: Declaration Revised as received on 07/12/00; Information Disclosure Statement as received on 09/27/00; and Information Disclosure Statement as received on 03/17/00.

Specification

2. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

3. The applicant or their representatives are urged to review the specification and submit corrections for all mistakes of a grammatical, clerical, or typographical nature.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-4, 9-11, 13-16, 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schrofer U.S. Patent Number 4,682,284 (herein referred to as Schrofer) in view of Joshi et al, U.S. Patent Number 5,954,815 (herein referred to as Joshi).

5. Referring to claims 1 and 21 Schrofer has taught a method including:

in a queue, writing a first object to a first location indicated by a write pointer (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-15);

making a qualitative determination whether or not to retain the first object within the queue (Schrofer column 3 lines 13-16);

if the qualitative determination is to retain the first object, then advancing the write pointer to indicate a second location within the queue into which to write a second object (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-32); and

if the qualitative determination is not to retain the first object, then maintaining the write pointer to indicate the first location within the queue into which to write the second object, so that the first object is overwritten by the second object (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-32). Schrofer has not explicitly taught where the object stored in the first location was an instruction. Joshi has taught where the object stored in the first location was an instruction (Joshi abstract, figure 3, column 4 lines 12-15). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings taught by Schrofer and Joshi. Both teach storing information into entries of a queue. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would recognize that instructions could be stored in the queue of Schrofer after the instructions have been fetched from an instruction cache (Joshi figure 3 reference number 50 column 4 lines 1-11). By fetching instructions before they are needed and storing them in a queue allows the processor to have quick access to the instructions when it is ready to decode and/or execute the instructions. Now, when the processor is ready for the instructions, they are waiting in a queue in the processor and do not have to be fetched from some other memory, which delays the execution of that instruction. This is known as prefetching, and was a common

method in the art at the time of the invention. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings taught by Schrofer and Joshi to reduce the access time needed to fetch instructions since the instructions are ready and waiting in a queue.

6. Referring to claim 13 Schrofer has taught an apparatus comprising:

a queue for buffering a first object propagated from a source to a destination (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-15); and

write logic to make a qualitative determination whether or not to retain the first object within the queue (Schrofer column 3 lines 13-16); if the qualitative determination is to retain the first instruction, to advance a write pointer to indicate a second location within the queue into which to write a second object; and, if the qualitative determination is not to return the first object, to maintain the write pointer to indicate the first location within the queue into which to write the second object, so that the first object is overwritten by the second object (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-32).

Schrofer has not explicitly taught where the object stored in the first location was an instruction. Joshi has taught where the object stored in the first location was an instruction (Joshi abstract, figure 3, column 4 lines 12-15). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings taught by Schrofer and Joshi. Both teach storing information into entries of a queue. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would recognize that instructions could be stored in the queue of Schrofer after the instructions have been fetched from an instruction cache (Joshi figure 3 reference number 50 column 4 lines 1-11). By fetching instructions before they are needed and storing them in a

queue allows the processor to have quick access to the instructions when it is ready to decode and/or execute the instructions. Now, when the processor is ready for the instructions, they are waiting in a queue in the processor and do not have to be fetched from some other memory, which delays the execution of that instruction. This is known as prefetching, and was a common method in the art at the time of the invention. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings taught by Schrofer and Joshi to reduce the access time needed to fetch instructions since the instructions are ready and waiting in a queue.

7. Referring to claims 2 and 14 Schrofer has taught wherein the qualitative determination includes examining a valid bit associated with the first instruction to determine validity of the first instruction (Schrofer figure 4 reference numbers 310,315, and 301 column 11 lines 16-25), making the qualitative determination to retain the first instruction if the valid bit indicates the first instruction is being valid, and making the qualitative determination not to retain the first instruction if the valid bit indicates the first instruction as being invalid (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-32).

8. Referring to claims 3 and 15 the combination of Schrofer and Joshi has taught wherein a plurality of instructions are written to the queue as a set of a predetermined number of instructions (Joshi column 4 lines 7-11 and line 51-column 5 line16; the number of instructions that are received by the queue is determined by how many instructions are dispatched each clock cycle, if no instructions are dispatched, then all four instructions are placed in the queue, which is known beforehand, or predetermined), and wherein at least one instruction of the set is indicated as being invalid by an associated valid bit on the account of being outside a trace of

instructions (Joshi column 7 lines 1-21; where the instructions that are after the delay instruction are indicated as being invalid, since there are outside of a trace of instructions)

9. Referring to claims 4 and 16 the combination of Schrofer and Joshi has taught wherein a plurality of instructions are written to the queue in a set of a predetermined number of instructions (Joshi column 4 lines 7-11 and line 51-column 5 line16; the number of instructions that are received by the queue is determined by how many instructions are dispatched each clock cycle, if no instructions are dispatched, then all four instructions are placed in the queue, which is known beforehand, or predetermined), and wherein at least one instruction of the set is indicated as being invalid on account of a branch misprediction relating to a branch instruction upstream of the at least one instruction in a stream of instructions (Joshi column 6 lines 35-53 and column 7 lines 1-21).

10. Referring to claim 9 the combination of Schrofer and Joshi has taught wherein the first instruction is received into the queue as part of a set of instructions comprising a first predetermined number of instructions and read from the queue to an instruction destination as part of a second set of instructions comprising a second number of instructions (Joshi column 4 lines 7-11 and line 51-column 5 line16; the number of instructions that are received by the queue is determined by how many instructions are dispatched each clock cycle, if no instructions are dispatched, then all four instructions are placed in the queue, and since different instructions are dispatched to different execution paths, shown in figure 3 reference numbers 74 and 82, instructions in some paths will take longer or shorter amounts of times, depending on the path it is in, therefore being part of different sets of instructions when it enters the queue and when it leaves the queue).

11. Referring to claims 10 and 20 Schrofer has taught wherein the first instruction is written from a source to a destination, and wherein the queue comprises a first path between source and destination, the method including propagating the first instruction from the source to the destination via a second path, not including the queue, if the queue is empty (Schrofer column 3 lines 40-58).

12. Referring to claim 11 Schrofer has taught including selecting between the first and second paths to receive the first instruction for propagation to the destination (Schrofer column 3 lines 40-58).

13. Referring to claim 22 Schrofer has taught wherein the sequence of instructions cause a multiprocessor to perform the step of examining a valid bit associated with the instruction to determine validity of the first instruction (Schrofer figure 4 reference numbers 310,315, and 301 column 11 lines 16-25), to make the qualitative determination to retain the first instruction if the valid bit indicates the first instruction as being valid, and to make the qualitative determination not to retain the first instruction if the valid bit indicates the first instruction as being invalid (Schrofer column 3 lines 10-32)..

14. Claims 5-8 and 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Schrofer and Joshi in further in view of Mitchell et al, U.S. Patent Number 4,841,476 (herein referred to as Mitchell).

15. Referring to claims 5 and 17 the combination of Schrofer and Joshi has not taught wherein the first instruction comprises a first microinstruction. Mitchell has taught wherein the first instruction comprises a first microinstruction (Mitchell figure 2, column 4 lines 35-39). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to

combine the teachings of the combination of Schrofer and Joshi with the teachings of Mitchell. Microinstructions are used in many modern computers today, such as RISC systems. Microinstructions need to be stored in queues before, after, and/or during execution, just as any other instruction is stored so that the instructions are easily accessible with quick access time. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the combination of Schrofer and Joshi with the teachings of Mitchell so that the microinstructions can be accessed by various parts of the processor from queues with small access times, which reduce the time for execution.

16. Referring to claims 6 and 18 the combination of Schrofer, Joshi, and Mitchell has taught wherein the first microinstruction is written to the queue from a microinstruction cache (Mitchell figure 2, column 4 lines 35-39).

17. Referring to claims 7 and 19 the combination of Schrofer, Joshi, and Mitchell has taught wherein the first microinstruction is part of a trace of microinstructions received from the microinstruction cache (Joshi column 4 lines 7-11 and line 51-column 5 line16; Joshi teaches that several instructions are dispatched from the cache to the queue, as part of a trace).

18. Referring to claim 8 the combination of Schrofer, Joshi, Panwar, and Mitchell has taught wherein the first instruction is received from an instruction source operating in a first clocking domain into the queue and read from the queue to an instruction destination operating in a second clocking domain (Schrofer column 9 line 62-column 10 line 15; it is described here where the clock signal that writes information into the queue is at a different frequency than the clock signal that is used to read information out of the queue).

19. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Schrofer and Joshi in view of Nemirovsky et al, U.S. Patent Number 6,477,562 (herein referred to as Nemirovsky).

20. Referring to claim 12 the combination of Schrofer and Joshi has not taught wherein the queue includes a first portion to support a first thread within a multithreaded environment and a second portion to support a second thread within the multithreaded environment, and wherein the first location into which the first instruction is written is located in the first portion if the first instruction comprises part of the first thread. Nemirovsky has taught wherein the queue includes a first portion to support a first thread within a multithreaded environment and a second portion to support a second thread within the multithreaded environment, and wherein the first location into which the first instruction is written is located in the first portion if the first instruction comprises part of the first thread (Nemirovsky column 6 line 65-column 7 line 11; since a single queue could be partitioned for separate threads, it would be inherent that if one partition was allocated for a particular thread, than an instruction pertaining to that thread would be placed in that partition, or portion). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the combination of Schrofer and Joshi with the teachings of Nemirovsky so that the queue would be partitioned for multithreaded processing. By having separate portions or partitions in the queue for different threads allows the scheduler that dedicates different resources to the individual threads to easily access the instructions from the individual threads. When the scheduler is to send an instruction from thread 2, for example, it may go to the first entry from the second portion of the queue to find the next instruction for that thread, instead of searching through all the instructions for the next instruction for the second

thread, which would result in a longer delay. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have separate portions or partitions in the queue for individual threads to reduce the amount of time to find and access the next instruction to be processed from a particular thread.

Conclusion

21. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure as follows. Applicant is reminded that in amending in response to a rejection of claims, the patentable novelty must be clearly shown in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited and the objections made. Applicant must also show how the amendments avoid such references and objections. See 37 CFR 1.111(c).

Phillips et al., U.S. Patent Number 6,237,074, has taught a tagged prefetch and instruction decoder for variable length instruction set and method of operation.

22. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Charles A Harkness whose telephone number is 703-305-7579. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. with every other Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Chan can be reached on 703-305-9712. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-746-7239 for regular communications and 703-746-7238 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-7579.

Charles Allen Harkness

Examiner

Art Unit 2183

January 23, 2003

EDDIE CHAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100